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RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0508
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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 000653

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PARM PREL MARR KNNP AU
SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN ARMS CONTROL PLANS: CTBT, IAEA SAL LAB;
G-8 GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP; SMALL ARMS

REF: (A) STATE 56239 (B) SAINT-ANDRE YAP E-MAIL
06/02/09

Classified By: Econ/Pol Counselor Dean Yap. Reason: 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Austrian MFA Disarmament Chief Alexander Marschik provided an overview of MFA arms control priorities. He reported FonMin Spindelegger's keen interest in meeting Secretary Clinton to discuss strategies for advancing CTBT entry-into-force (EIF), stressing GoA flexibility and openness to U.S. ideas. He reported that the Austrian Research Center (ARC) was close to agreeing on a proposal that would allow the IAEA to expand the Safeguards Analytical Lab (SAL). Unfamiliar with the G-8 Global Partnership, he welcomed reftel information and promised that Austria would join the project, stressing, though, that MFA budget cuts would not allow Austria to put resources into the project in the near term. He also noted an intention to organize a conference in early 2010 to look at the issues involved in small arms/light weapons control. Throughout the meeting, Marschik stressed the GoA's recognition that the U.S. was in the lead on WMD non-proliferation and that Austria could align itself fully with the program outlined in President Obama's Prague speech. End Summary.

CTBT

¶2. (C) Austria, Marschik said, believed that the U.S. decision to ratify the CTBT could have a cascade effect on other states -- perhaps beginning with China, Indonesia, and Israel -- whose ratification is necessary to secure EIF. Acknowledging Iran and the DPRK as the hardest cases, he nonetheless argued that a diplomatic strategy plus the pressure of their growing isolation, could be used to bring about even their ratification of CTBT. It was to discuss such a strategy that FonMins Spidelegger and Ugarte of Costa Rica have requested their meeting with Secretary Clinton. In addition to discussing direct diplomatic engagement with key states, the Austrians and Costa Ricans would like to discuss U.S. goals for the September 24-25 Article XIV Conference.

¶3. (C) Marschik stressed that the Austrians were hoping to hear U.S. ideas, recognized the sensitivity of the U.S. ratification process, and were prepared to organize both a visit to Washington and the Article XIV Conference in ways that would best serve the USG's ratification strategy. He said specifically that if the relatively high profile of the Conference last year (with a speech by former SecDef Perry and attendance by Michael Douglas) were problematic, the GoA would be willing to revert to a lower-key, workman-like format. He also noted that a meeting with the Secretary would boost the Conference co-chairmen's access and credibility in their direct diplomatic engagement with

ministers of key states.

IAEA SAL

¶4. (C) Marschik reported that the delay in reaching agreement between the ARC, which owns the land where the SAL is to be expanded, and the IAEA was traceable to a restructuring of the ARC in 2008 intended to put the Center on a more independent footing. The ARC had been made responsible for covering more of its costs and the GoA's voice on the ARC Board was reduced (Marschik himself had previously been an ex officio member of the Board). The ARC Board was, in the new circumstances, unhappy with GoA pressure to provide land and other services to the IAEA at no cost. However, Marschik did believe that a deal had been worked out with the IAEA and that the ARC Board was to meet in June (after the IAEA BoG) to formally endorse it, after which it would be passed to the IAEA for approval. Marschik admitted GoA irritation with both Germany and South Africa who, for reasons unrelated to the SAL matter, were trying to paint Austria as a bad host -- Germany in order to win the IRENA HQ for Bonn and South Africa out of spite at Austrian non-support for its IAEA DG candidate.

G-8 Global Partnership

¶5. (U) Based on ref B, Econ/Pol Counselor raised G-8 Partnership membership with Marschik, (Note: Ref A did not include Vienna among the action addressees). Marschik was unsure whether Austria was a member of the Partnership, but responded enthusiastically to the briefing, saying Austria would certainly join. However, he also stressed that Austria would not be able to provide new resources to Partnership programs in the near future because of MFA budget cuts.

Small Arms/Light Weapons

¶6. In a general discussion of the financial and political constraints facing Austrian arms control/disarmament policy, Marschik noted FonMin Spindegger's personal interest in the issues -- though admitting he started from a low knowledge base. He also stressed again that on WMD, Austria welcomed new USG activism and believed its interests would be well-served by close alignment with the USG. However, Marschik also thought there could be room for an Austrian initiative on small arms and light weapons. To pursue the idea, he reportedly plans to host a conference on the issue in early 2010 in Vienna.

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